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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 H-02 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 ARAE-00

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INFO USMISSION USUN
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

C O N F I D E N T I A

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, SHUM, AR
SUBJECT: ABDUCTION OF URUGUAYAN REFUGEES MICHELINI AND GUTIERREZ
REFS: (A) STATE 121966, (B) BUENOS AIRES 3343, (C) USUN 2156

1. GOA HAS MADE NO PUBLIC STATEMENT CONCERNING ABDUCTION OF ZELMAR MICHELINI ON MAY 17 AND HECTOR GUTIERREZ RUIZ ON MAY 18 BY ARMED MEN WHO INVADED THEIR RESIDENCES. AS REPORTED REFTEL (B), HOWEVER, HIGH GOA OFFICIALS HAVE PRIVATELY ASSURED EDITOR OF NEWSPAPER "LA OPINION" THAT GOA HAS NO KNOWLEDGE OF ABDUCTIONS. "LA OPINION" IS ONE OF THE LIBERAL AND COURAGEOUS BUENOS AIRES PAPERS, AND MICHELINI MARGINALLY ASSOCIATED WITH PAPER AND FRIENDLY WITH SOME STAFF MEMBERS.
MAY 20 ISSUE FEATURES ABDUCTION OF THE TWO URUGUAYAN POLITICIANS ON FRONT PAGE AND SEVERAL COLUMNS INSIDE PAPER. OTHER PAPERS HAVE GIVEN STORY LITTLE ATTENTION OR HAVE COMMENTED ONLY CAUTIOUSLY AND MILDLY ABOUT POSSIBLE DAMAGE TO GOA IMAGE.

2. "LA OPINION" CITES
KIDNAPPERS MADE NO EFFORT TO HIDE ACTIVITY AND APPARENTLY HAD NO FEAR OF POLICE INTERVENTION. IN GUTIERREZ CASE, WITNESSES CLAIM ABDUCTORS STAYED IN APARTMENT FOR AN HOUR, SHOUTING FROM WINDOW TO OTHERS IN STREET BELOW. COMMON TO BOTH
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REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 4/20/82
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ABDUCTIONS WAS USE OF AUTOS WITHOUT PLATES, A TRADE-MARK OF THE GOA'S INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, THE SIDE (SECRETARIA DE INTELIGENCIA DEL ESTADO).

3. IN ITS TREATMENT OF THE ABDUCTIONS, "LA OPINION" EDITORIALIZED SOLEMNLY THAT ONLY POSSIBLE EXPLANATION FOR ABDUCTIONS, GIVEN GOA'S AND PRES VIDELA'S ASSURANCES OF RESPECT FOR LEGALITY UPON TAKING POWER, WAS THAT SOME INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL ENEMY IS TRYING TO CAUSE FAILURE OF NEW GOVT BY DAMAGING IMAGE. PAPER PULLED OUT ALL STOPS BY POINTING OUT ARGENTINA'S DELICATE POSITION, WITH CITATIONS OF POSSIBLE NEGATIVE EFFECTS UPON INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS, ADVERTISING EXECUTIVES CONVENTION PRESENTLY IN BA, SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS CONGRESS IN CARACAS, ITALIAN AND AMERICAN ELECTIONS, NEW ARGENTINE AMBASSADORS TAKING UP POSTS, AND UNHCR REP VISITING ARGENTINA. OVERALL EFFECT IS CLEAR IMPLICATION THAT GOA ELEMENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ABDUCTIONS, AND THAT GOA WILL PAY HEAVY PRICE IN DAMAGE TO ITS IMAGE, A LA CHILE.

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